

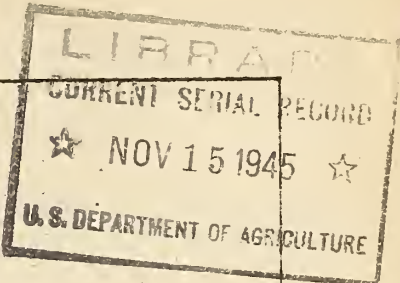
Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current
scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

24W
61

United States Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service

Wildlife Leaflet 259



Chicago 54, Ill.

*

September 1944

CARE OF PARROTS

Prepared in Economic Wildlife Investigations
Division of Wildlife Research

Contents

	Page		Page
Introduction	1	Parrots maladies--Continued	
Quarters	2	Egg-binding	8
Selection of species	3	Difficulty in refeathering	
General care	5	after molt	8
Feeding	5	Feather pulling	8
Grit	6	Sore feet	9
Breeding	6	Psittacosis (parrot fever) . .	9
Teaching parrots	7	Importation, inspection, and	
Parrot maladies	7	quarantine	9
Colds and pneumonia	7	Publications on parrots . . .	10
Indigestion and constipation. .	7		

INTRODUCTION

Probably no other birds become so entirely domesticated and so much attached to their keepers as parrots. Certainly no other pet birds are so long-lived. Nevertheless, parrots are not without their bad points. They are subject to a dangerous disease that is transmissible to human beings (see page 9); many species indulge in harsh screaming; and most of them will attack smaller birds with which they may be caged. This leaflet is compiled largely from the publications on parrots listed here-in which should be consulted for more detailed information.

NOTE.--This leaflet supersedes Biological Survey leaflet 521, issued in October 1920 by the Bureau of Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture.

QUARTERS

Parrots may be tethered to stands or confined in cages, indoor bird rooms, or in outdoor aviaries. Parrot stands should have wooden--not metal--perches, although the ends may be protected from the birds' gnawing activities by metal caps. The tether chain should be light, smooth, and furnished with a swivel at each end. Of the various ways of keeping parrots, the stand method is the least advisable, but a stand must be used for such powerful species as the macaws, unless large cages made of strong iron rods are available.

Cages for parrots should be roomy, and square rather than round, and they should be equipped with plenty of perches of large diameter, standard food and water receptacles, and a removable bottom. For the removable bottom and the trays, galvanized iron is the best material. Parrots tame more rapidly in cages solidly enclosed on three sides; such cages also give more protection from drafts. An abundance of clean grit makes a good floor covering for a cage, though sawdust or wood shavings are also serviceable. Cages of seed eaters should be cleaned weekly, but those of soft feeders must be cleaned daily. As part of the cleaning process, the perches and the food and the water receptacles should be scrubbed thoroughly.

Indoor bird rooms preferably should have a southern exposure and should be well lighted. In such rooms the birds may be confined in cages, or they may be free to fly about if they are not too numerous or of too great diversity in size. A very low door or an arrangement similar to a storm door is advisable to prevent escape of the birds when persons enter the room. Ventilation by screened windows is necessary, but drafts must be prevented. Branches of trees supplied for perches and for whittling will tend to reduce damage to exposed woodwork; to prevent any damage to woodwork, the birds must be caged or the wood covered with metal. In any event, there must be plenty of comfortable perches, which should not be placed close to the sides of the aviary. If running water cannot be provided, it is better to use shallow pans to hold the drinking water; the use of the so-called bird fountains is likely to result in a stale water supply or the fouling of the water by droppings, either being highly objectionable.

The ideal housing for parrots is the outdoor aviary, which may be of modest size or as large and elaborate as the purse of the owner will justify. The top should be solidly roofed to shelter nests and roosts from sun and rain, and on one side (preferably the north) there should be a glass-fronted compartment for a cold-weather retreat. Wire netting without soldered joints should be used for the aviary, as otherwise the parrots would detach and swallow the solder and might be poisoned. For the same reason, paints and varnish should not be used about the aviary. If desired, the aviary can be treated with creosote. The enclosed compartment should be provided with a dependable source of heat, and with watering, feeding, and roosting equipment so that it can be used for protracted periods when necessary. The floor should be of cement, brick, or